



## San Diego County Water Authority

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March 18, 2014

California Department of Water Resources  
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management  
Financial Assistance Branch

Keith Wallace  
Zaffar Eusuff  
901 P Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

#### MEMBER AGENCIES

Carlsbad  
Municipal Water District

City of Del Mar

City of Escondido

City of National City

City of Oceanside

City of Poway

City of San Diego

Fallbrook  
Public Utility District

Helix Water District

Lakeside Water District

Olivenhain  
Municipal Water District

Olay Water District

Padre Dam  
Municipal Water District

Camp Pendleton  
Marine Corps Base

Rainbow  
Municipal Water District

Ramona  
Municipal Water District

Rincon del Diablo  
Municipal Water District

San Dieguito Water District

Santa Fe Irrigation District

South Bay Irrigation District

Vallecitos Water District

Valley Center  
Municipal Water District

Vista Irrigation District

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Municipal Water District

#### OTHER REPRESENTATIVE

County of San Diego

### **Subject: Recommendations for Process Improvements in Emergency Drought Relief Grant Program**

Dear Mr. Wallace and Mr. Eusuff:

The San Diego County Water Authority welcomes this opportunity to recommend ways that the Department of Water Resources (DWR) may improve the way it awards funds in the emergency drought relief grant program. This letter represents the recommendations of the Water Authority and the other San Diego Region water leaders who have signed it. It is important to note that the San Diego Regional Water Management Group (RWMG) also will submit a letter with recommendations for how DWR may improve operation of its remaining Proposition 84 grant solicitations. As a member of the San Diego RWMG, the Water Authority will sign on to that letter as well.

Given the urgency of the water situation in California, DWR should not use its traditional proposal solicitation and review process to award the \$200 million in emergency drought relief funds. DWR has taken up to 11 months to award funds in previous rounds of the Proposition 84 IRWM grant program. The awards must occur much more swiftly this time.

For a truly “expedited” round of funding, DWR should revise the way it solicits, evaluates and awards the IRWM emergency drought relief grants. DWR should establish maximum funding amounts proportional to the funding area allocations in PRC §75027 and award “block grants” of funds to planning regions in funding areas that comprise one eligible region or have adopted agreements about how they will share the available IRWM funding.

DWR would use a simplified proposal review per PRC §75026 before releasing the funds to eligible planning regions. The proposal submitted by a planning region would

explain what type of projects it plans to fund and demonstrate how the projects satisfy the requirements established in SB 104 concerning projects that are eligible for funding. This would allow the planning region to solicit, select, award and contract for drought response projects directly. A region that receives block grant funding would agree to report the actual projects it funds to DWR within 90 days of the grant award, along with task-oriented budgets and schedules for each project. The planning region also would confirm that the projects are consistent with its IRWM Plan.

When it reviews grant applications from eligible planning regions, DWR would defer to regional project selection processes where they are conducted through open and transparent stakeholder committees. Those regions that establish stakeholder-driven project selection committees, such as San Diego, are implementing robust scoring and vetting of their project suites prior to submittal to DWR. While we agree with DWR's efforts to ensure funding of truly integrated water resources projects, there is no need for additional extensive scoring and ranking of proposals in such regions. PRC §75028(a) states that DWR:

“shall defer to approved local project selection and review projects only for consistency with the purposes of §75026.”

As directed in PRC §75026, DWR should request only information necessary to confirm that the contents of the grant applications is consistent with the local IRWM Plan and the funding agreement adopted by planning regions in the funding area. DWR also should confirm that the project concepts provided by the planning region will provide multiple benefits and help to achieve DWR's program preferences. Extensive development of supporting information beyond those necessary to comply with the Public Resources Code should be eliminated.

Deferring to the regional project selection process will reduce DWR's workload and the time necessary to process grant applications, which in turn will enable DWR to make grant awards more quickly. It also will avoid duplication of effort for regions that execute a robust project selection process and decrease the time commitment and cost of doing a grant application.

We appreciate this opportunity to suggest improvements for DWR's grant solicitation process. If you have any questions, please contact Mark Stadler, the San Diego IRWM Program Manager, at (858) 522-6735 or [mstadler@sdewa.org](mailto:mstadler@sdewa.org).

California Department of Water Resources  
Division of Integrated Regional Water Management  
Keith Wallace and Zaffar Eusuff  
March 18, 2014 - Page 3

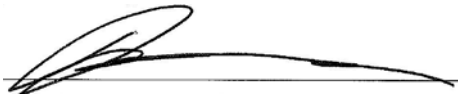
Sincerely,



Ken Weinberg, Director of Water Resources  
**San Diego County Water Authority (San Diego RWMG member)**



Marsi A. Steirer, Deputy Director, City of San Diego Public Utilities Department  
**City of San Diego (San Diego RWMG member)**



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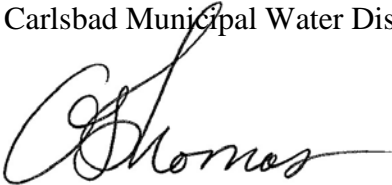
Cari Dale  
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City of Oceanside



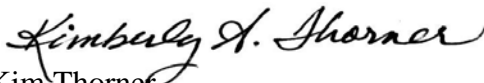
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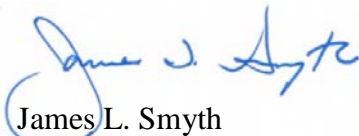
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California Department of Water Resources  
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March 18, 2014 - Page 5



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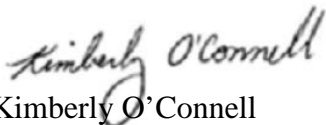
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